

# General John Burgoyne

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John Burgoyne was a very important man in England. He was born in London in 1722. After attending Westminster School, he joined the army when he was only eighteen years old. Three years later, he caused a bit of a scandal by eloping with the daughter of an English earl. They lived in France until the scandal died down, and they could pay off their debts.

In 1756, he rejoined the army and made quite a name for himself as an officer. Burgoyne was sent to the colonies in 1772. While stationed in Boston, Massachusetts, he was present for the Battle of Bunker Hill. Soon after this battle, he returned to England. In 1776, he was sent back to America. This time he was assigned to Canada. He was to be second in command under Sir Guy Carleton. Their mission was to invade New York and stop the rebel forces in the New England area. It didn't take long before Burgoyne got fed up with the leadership of Carleton. Burgoyne sailed back to England and personally persuaded King George III to let him take command of the British troops. The king agreed. He put Burgoyne in charge of 7,000 troops. The invasion of New York was now his job.



Burgoyne and his men took over Crown Point. They then moved on to Fort Ticonderoga and captured it. The battles were going the British way. As Burgoyne moved slowly to the south, things started to go badly. He had divided his troops into three groups. His plan was to have each of these groups swoop into New York from a different direction. They were to eventually all meet in Albany. He felt that by attacking in this way, he would successfully place all of the area under British control.

Unfortunately, all did not go as planned. Col. Barry St. Leger and his group were to come from the west. The colonial army was able to stop them. General William Howe was to send reinforcements to Burgoyne from the south. He didn't. Burgoyne was forced to fight battles at Freeman's Farm and Bemis Heights with less than one third of the men he had started with. His men were tired. They were embarrassed that they had not been able to defeat the colonists easily. On October 17, 1777, General John Burgoyne was forced to surrender to the colonial leader, General Horatio Gates at Saratoga.

Burgoyne returned to England a defeated man. What would he do now that he had no war to fight? He had been defeated. How could he ever get back the **status** in society he had enjoyed before the war? He tried politics, but that wasn't satisfying any more. Burgoyne decided to use his love of literature to become a writer. He wrote two plays. One was a **moderate** success, while the other was very successful. Late in his life, after the death of his first wife, Burgoyne fathered four children. One of his sons, Sir John Fox Burgoyne, followed in his father's footsteps as a military commander. General John Burgoyne died in 1792 and is buried in Westminster Abbey beside many other famous British citizens.

General John Burgoyne

## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. John Burgoyne was a native of France.
- A. True  
B. False

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Why did John Burgoyne drop out of the army and run away from his country?

- A. He wanted to write.
- B. He had married the daughter of an earl.
- C. He had committed a crime.
- D. He didn't like to fight.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. What event in American history did Burgoyne witness?

- A. The Battle of Bunker Hill
- B. The Boston Massacre
- C. The Declaration of Independence
- D. The Boston Tea Party

4. Why do you think General Burgoyne convinced the king to let him command the army?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 5. General Burgoyne had his troops invading New York from three different directions.

- A. False
- B. True

6. What were two of the main reasons Burgoyne's plan for invasion failed?

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\_\_\_\_\_ 7. What happened after Burgoyne's defeat at Bemis Heights?

- A. He went to Albany.
- B. He fought at Saratoga.
- C. He surrendered at Saratoga.
- D. He went back to France.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. How did Burgoyne spend his time after the war?

- A. He became a gentleman farmer.
- B. He served in Parliament.
- C. He became a playwright.
- D. He died as soon as he returned.

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